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Vandals shoot out power line insulators BPA offers up to \$1,000 for information

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Bonneville Power Administration

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PORTLAND, Ore. – The Bonneville Power Administration is offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals who caused an estimated \$6,000 damage to a power line located 27 miles south of Taft.

Taft is near the Montana-Idaho border located off of Interstate 90 and U.S. Highway 10 near the Continental Divide. The affected line runs through parts of Mineral County, Mont., and Shoshone County, Idaho.

Vandals shot out insulators on BPA's Dworshak – Taft 500 kV line sometime before 8:35 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 11. The incident caused the line to be out of service for over 10 hours. Fortunately, there was no disruption of electrical service to customers. Switching operations enabled BPA to provide alternative pathways for electrical power delivery while repairs were being made. The cost of repairs gets passed on to ratepayers.

"There are no suspects, but the likely perpetrators are young adults shooting at insulators," explained BPA Security Specialist Mike Berg. "High voltage power lines also pose an enormous risk to anyone who shoots at them. Downed power lines can cause fires and lethal ground voltages can kill or injure the vandals and others in the area. This is a particular concern during periods of dry weather, such as we've been experiencing lately."

The Crime Witness Program was created by BPA in 1994 as a cost-effective way to involve the public in combating crimes that could potentially cause power outages. Through its neighborhood watch-style program, BPA offers cash rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators.

The program has resulted in a favorable downward trend in the number of insulator units replaced. Since 1994, the Crime Witness Program has generated hundreds

of telephone tips resulting in dozens of arrests, thousands of dollars of recovered property and, most importantly, deterrence of future crime. Estimated savings since the program began totals more than

\$600,000. Informants can call toll free 1-800-437-2744. The identity of informants is kept strictly confidential.

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